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by

Rui Wu

2014

The Report Committee for Rui Wu
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**The Making of The Trial,
A Short Film**

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**The Making of The Trial,
A Short Film**

by

Rui Wu, B. Law

Report

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
The University of Texas at Austin
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Arts

**The University of Texas at Austin
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Dedication

I dedicate this report to my parents, for their endless love, support and encouragement. Thank you both for giving me strength to reach the stars and chase my filmmaking dream.

I also dedicate this report to all my friends, who helped and encouraged me during the making of *The Trial*. Without them, The Trial or the report would never be finished. I cannot list all the names here, but you will always be on my mind. I will always remember that we made a film together.

I give special thanks to Mr. Glen Kelp for supporting me throughout the entire course and providing generous help.

Acknowledgements

I would like to sincerely thank my committee members, Prof. Charles Ramírez Berg and Ms. Anne Lewis, for serving on my committee and spending countless hours on my work. A special thank you to my supervisor Prof. Berg, for his encouragement and guidance throughout the process. I also thank my graduate advisor Dr. Shanti Kumar for supporting me and supervising me during the course.

I wish to thank University of Texas at Austin and the Radio-Television-Film department, for allowing me to initiate the project and providing generous assistance. Special thanks goes to my professor Mr. Geoff Marslett and staff member Jeremy Gruy. Both of them provided generous help on my work.

To all my friends, thank you for being with me for both the happy and the difficult moments in my life. Your love makes my life better.

Abstract

The Making of The Trial, A Short Film

Rui Wu, MA

The University of Texas at Austin, 2014

Supervisor: Charles Ramírez Berg

This report narrates the production process of my film project, *The Trial*. It starts with how the script was written and continues with a description of how the filming process was completed, then ends with a discussion of the post-production plan. This is a record of all the happy and challenging moments that arose during the production process.

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Chapter 1: Motives and Objectives

From the moment my mother took me to the movie theater for the first time when I was six, I was fascinated by film. My love for film led me to become a Media Studies student at University of Texas at Austin, researching film theories. I am very grateful that the university has a flexible course taking policy, which directed me to a new world when I took my first production class, Introduction to Editing. All of a sudden, it was very clear to me that film theories studies could not satisfy me. My energetic mind calls for creative thinking and work. As I started to take more production classes and make short films, I discovered a hidden talent for filmmaking that was buried for too long.

When the time approached to consider my graduation, I chose to make a short film and write a report. For me, the motive behind this project is simply my love for filmmaking. I set up three goals for this project, which are also the reasons why I think graduating with a film production project is the right choice for me. First, the project is a test and challenge for my filmmaking skills. Over the semesters, I did make some short films, but they were not as polished as a fine project could be. I wanted to conclude my graduate studies in filmmaking with a more professional project. The project would help me answer some questions about myself. Do I have the ability to work on film production? How much do I know about professional filmmaking? And, can I apply what I learned from class to a film. Secondly, I'm using this project as a manifesto for myself to confirm my career goal. My personal trip towards film was not an easy one. After trying different academic subjects – law, media studies, film theory, and film production, I believe that filmmaking will be my final calling. Film production is something I was passionate about pursuing since my childhood and I will always devote myself to it. Finally, I'm hoping to use this project as a starting point of my career in film production.

Ideally, I will submit this project to several film festivals upon completion. Also, I plan to include this film in my resume and film images in my reel for job hunting.

Chapter 2: The Creation of the Story

Before I started to write a script for this project, my advisor Dr. Charles Ramirez Berg asked me to think through a question: what message am I hoping to deliver out of the film? My answer was that the film allows people read through my thoughts, style and eventually me as a person.

I had a script in hand at that time, *The Trial*, which I wrote for a class last semester. It's a story in a relatively traditional style. I finished the revision of this script before August, but was struggling with whether I really want to use it for the project. I loved the story, but it's not related to any of my experiences, and did not totally fall into my expectation of what I hope to convey through the project.

After a meeting with my advisor, I decided to write another script. My advisor and I determined that I'm more an image-driven director than a storyteller, so I started to write an all-image story upon his encouragement.

In the middle of the writing, three events helped me with constructing images for the script. In the end of July, I went on a road trip to Yellow Stone and Grand Canyon National Park. What I saw during the trip gave me certain inspiration for the script. I watched *The Tree of Life* before finishing writing the second script, which helped me a lot with telling a story through images. Also, my friend invited me to spend an afternoon at Barton Springs. The water and the clouds on that day were like film images. I used them in my script and immediately decided that one of my shooting locations would be the Barton Springs Pool.

In the mid-August, I finished the second script - *Insomnia*. The story is based on my personal experience, dreams and my feelings towards the world around me. Instead of telling a story chronologically, this script is formed by imaginary images and flashbacks.

The story is told through feelings, and the feelings are presented via images. I was very satisfied with the script I created, but I did understand that I had to consider if I had the ability to shoot this story with limited budget and resources.

After many considerations, both my advisor and I agreed that *The Trial* script would be more practical for a student film. The reasons that I gave up the script I like are: firstly, *The Trial* contains fewer locations and simpler settings while *Insomnia* needs more than 10 locations and complicated settings. The main story in *The Trial* happens in an imaginary courtroom. Though some effort would be needed to decorate a studio to be like a courtroom, it's still possible. As mentioned before, *Insomnia* is constructed by drifting images. The decoration on set needed more technical support. For instance, one scene in *Insomnia* needed certain amount of mirror pieces and another one happened on a flaming sunflower field. I would have problems realizing these as a student. Secondly, considering the limited budget I had for production, *The Trial* would be more feasible. Spending the same amount of money, it's possible to have a good set and produce good images shooting *The Trial*, but it would be difficult to avoid inferior images producing *Insomnia*. Thirdly, using an unconventional story for my graduation project might be risky. Bold filmmaker like Orson Welles would tell me (if he was alive) at this point to make my own film and ignore any critics. However, as a student, I do want to listen to other people's advice and feedback. Finally, to make a film out of the script that I like, I'm confronting technical problems. All the dream-like scenes rely on hours and hours of work in After Effects. The budget and time I had limited my choices. Giving all the difficulties I may have for shooting *Insomnia*, I made the decision that *The Trial* would be my graduation project.

After making some slight revisions, I finalized the shooting script in August.
(Appendix A: *The Trial* Shooting Script)

Chapter 3: Getting Ready for the Filming

Although *The Trial* is more practical in terms of production, I was still facing several challenges. First, the story requires a courtroom set. A set designer was needed to help with set decoration. Yet, I had very little experience with such a complex set. Second, I didn't have a potential Director of Photography (DP) candidate. The DP is the most important position in a film production team. I started asking among my film friends when I finished the two scripts, but nobody would be available during my shooting time. Third, I had limited budget. Though fundraising was part of the post-production plan, I still needed to provide the money before going into post-production. Finally, this story contains seven leading actors, four supporting roles, including a newborn baby, and 60 extras for a mob scene. My concerns were looking for the baby and the extras, and working with so many people.

Facing all these challenges, the pre-production started in mid-August.

The Plan

As the producer for *The Trial*, my friend Glen Kelp and I started working on a rough time frame for the project. To allow enough time for us to be well prepared, I suggested the shooting began around Oct. 15, which gave us two months for pre-production. It also would not have conflicts with two big events happening in the city, which are Austin City Limit music festival on Oct. 9 – 12 and Austin Film Festival starting on Oct. 24. Taking everything into consideration, we drafted out a rough schedule for the production (Appendix B: The Trial Rough Production Plan).

Production Budget

Film production needs money. Money was the first thing that needs to be found. When I decided to dedicate to this film project, my parents were the first two people who supported me. I'm proud to say that *The Trial* is entirely sponsored by my generous parents. The next step was to work out an efficient budget plan.

Working as my budgeting assistant, Mofei Wang helped with budgeting upon information I sent her. According to the Budget Overview form, a rough budget estimation for this project reached \$5700 (Figure 1: Page from *The Trial* Budget Overview).

Total Post-Production: \$0					
18-00 Insurance					
18-01 General Liability		Days			
18-02 Equipment	0	Days			
18-03 Car & Transportation Accidents	0	Days			
18-04 Errors & Omissions					
18-00 Total					
19-00 General &Administrative Expenses					
19-01 Telephone/Fax	1	Allow	20	20	
19-02 Copying	1	Allow	10	10	
19-03 Website	1	Allow	0	0	
19-04 Domain Name	1	Allow	0	0	
19-05 Publicity	1	Allow	0	0	
19-00 Total					30
Total Other: \$30					
Total Below-the-Line:					
Total Above and Below-the -Line					5,410
Contingency @ 5%					172
GRAND TOTAL: \$5,410					

Figure 1: Page from *The Trial* Budget Overview

Cast and Crew

The Casting and Crew Call was posted online on Sep. 1st as scheduled (Figure 2: Screenshot of *The Trial* Casting and Crew Call from <http://www.shortfilmtexas.com/>).

Casting and Crew Call for Austin, Texas Student Short Film "The Trial"

by Paul Bright | Sep 2, 2014 | Austin, Casting/Crew Calls |

Production Title: The Trial

Independent/Student/Studio: Student

Union/Non-Union: Non-Union

Production Type: Short Film

Production Format: HD

Production Location: Austin

Production Start Date: 10/15/2014

Production Wrap Date: 10/19/2014

Production Schedule: 5 days plus 2 days for pick ups

Director(s): Rui Wu

Synopsis: A man goes on a surreal trial for his "life crimes".

Character Breakdowns:

- The Man, male, 30-40. He is a normal man. He made normal mistakes: cheating on his wife, leaving his daughter, and wasting his own life. He didn't realize his fault until the end of the trial, but regrets always come too late.
- The Judge (as doctor in later scenes), male, 40-45. He stands for wisdom and justice. He's the judge in this trial. He's the justice for our lives.
- Plaintiff 2 (Mr. Baltar, the teacher), male, 40-45. He used to be a traditional teacher: kind, patient and conservative. After life got ruined by protagonist's lie as a kid, his anger towards the protagonist became tremendous.
- Plaintiff 3 (Jessie, the daughter), female, 20s. She's young and pretty, but you can still tell that she experienced something heartbreaking. Her father left her when she was a little girl. Suffering a life without a father, she certainly will raise the charge.
- Plaintiff 4 (Eve, the wife), female, 30-35. She is a decent woman. She tried to be a good wife even when her husband cheated on her, but the man left her eventually. Now her kind heart is gone.
- Plaintiff 5, male, 30-40. He's the doppelganger of the man. He's all the right thing.

Figure 2: Screenshot of *The Trial* Casting and Crew Call from <http://www.shortfilmtexas.com/>

I received countless emails from people who were interested in the project, including a gentleman who was willing to let his 4-month-old son act in the film and several mob scene inquiries. To let people talk freely, I set up an unofficial group on Facebook. I'm glad I did this because people have been writing encouraging words for me on the page, which strengthened my confidence on the journey of filmmaking. More people sent out emails willing to help with make-up, wardrobe, sound and lighting, but they were not certain with their availability during shooting dates when I wrote back to further confirm the schedule.

My classmates at the department recommended two set designers. I contacted them but found out they were not available around the shooting date. I connected with another set designer later on, but he was not based in Austin.

A friend, Travis Dover, whom I worked on a short film with, assured me that he'd help with lighting. Through him, I met my set designer Joe Averagi. We discussed the possibility of creating a courtroom in a studio and the price. I was satisfied with his rough plan for the set and the price he gave. Right before the launch of the pre-production, I drew a sketch of the setting for the courtroom. I had been revising it over the time and created a clear PDF file for it (Figure 3: Courtroom Setting Draft).

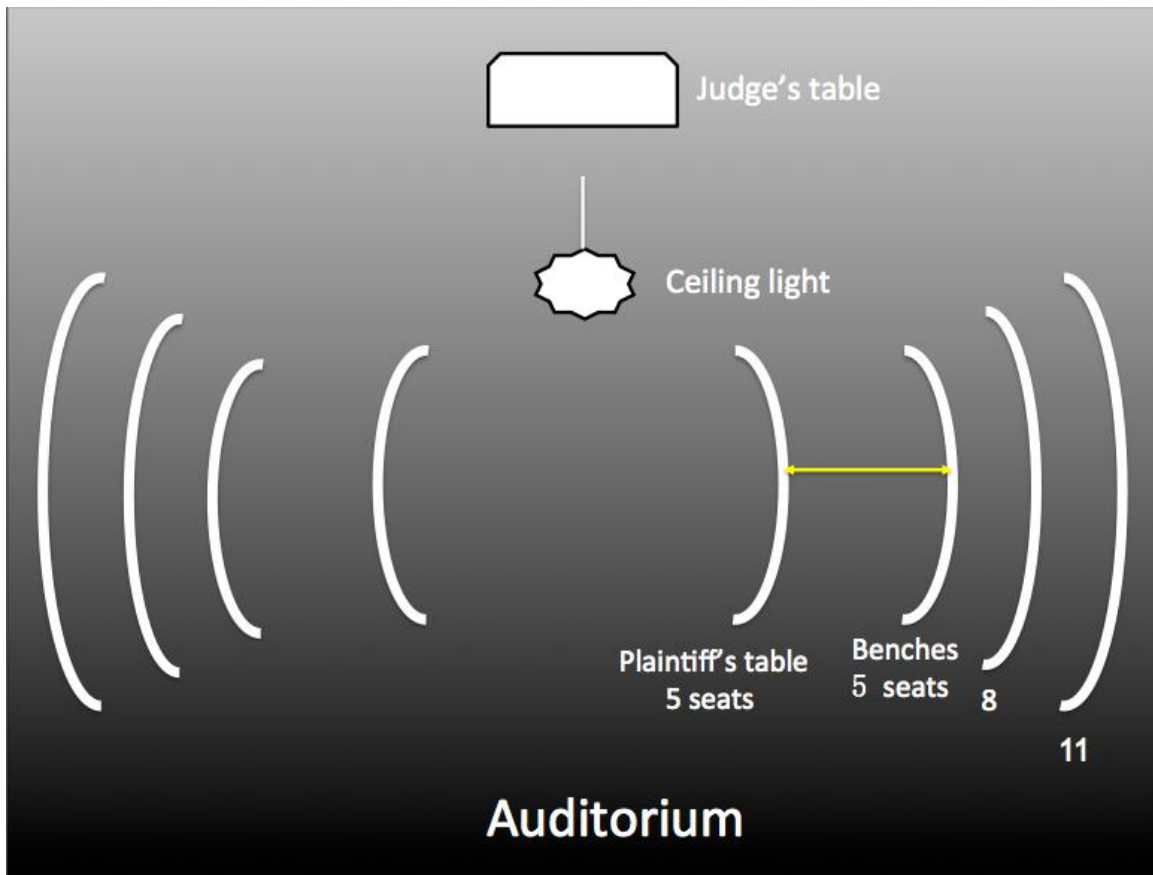


Figure 3: Courtroom Setting Draft

My newly joined set designer assured me that it's not too tricky to turn my sketch into the courtroom, in the real world.

Friends of my producer Glen in Estonia agreed to help with graphic design and music. I described my rough idea for the poster to the graphic designer, and he managed to show an amazing draft in a short time.

A few days later, I received a submission for the Director of Photography (DP) position from a very skillful camera operator, Colemar Nichols, whose resume very much impressed me. We met up and talked for a long time. Colemar indicated that I had clear

and creative vision for this story, and these visions inspired his mind more than any other projects recently. I was also pleased that I finally found a qualified DP.

A make-up artist, who had experience in big budget movies, including the new Star War movie, contacted me. Her name is Sherri Carpenter, a very kind lady. I was very lucky to have her on the team. We settled on a price and schedule very quickly.

Mr. Andy Ren contacted me around this time, requesting to join in the crew as an on set still photographer. I looked through the pictures he took and found out he was actually a very talented photographer. That my project sounded interesting to so many people made me very glad.

Through the online crew call and through friends, I had my crew for key positions in place at the beginning of September.

As for the cast, I replied to 15-20 submissions, notifying them that the audition will be held Sep. 13. Several actors couldn't make it to the audition on that day, so I agreed on accepting video audition as well. I sent out my script to my actor friend Mrs. Addie Alexander very early on. She was interested in acting as Plaintiff 1 (The Mom), and she got the role.

On Sep. 13, *The Trial* audition started at 3:00 in the afternoon. My producer Glen Kelp, and two Assistant Directors (AD), Nader Ibrahim and Elijahwan Butler, attended the audition with me. I learned a lot about different types of people on that day. One young actress came in without any preparation. She tried to explain that she was working on three different projects and couldn't remember which lines belonged to which film. Another actress was apparently prepared but she couldn't decide which emotional tone to use at the audition and asked me to choose one. A middle-aged actor lost his way on campus and called for directions. I sent my AD out of the building twice trying to find him. The strange thing was he never made it to the audition and never contacted us again.

The actress who submitted for Plaintiff 3 (Jessie) came in late. We all liked her performance but felt overwhelmed from her constantly apologizing for being late. Also coming to the audition were two lovely children. The little girl, whose name is Coppélia Guidry, did great at the audition.

Consulted with my producer and two ADs, I made tentative decisions on the cast. I appreciate all the actors who tried out for my film, willing to act for free. However, actors would not be available during the entire shooting period as it's an unpaid project. In order to cast the actors I preferred, I spent certain amount of time negotiating a schedule with every actor. At this point, I realized that it was not the perfect time for shooting a film in the city. Austin City Limits was happening right before the shooting and Austin Film Festival right after. Most actors were planning to attend the film fest, and some crews were interested in participating the music fest. While I couldn't change the overall schedule, the only way to still finish the shooting was to work out a schedule that worked for everyone. One of my actors couldn't be on set for the second weekend shooting. I had to compress all her scenes in one day. Another actor had another film to work on during my shooting time yet he was passionate about my project. Eventually, we worked out a schedule, which was convenient for both of us. Thanks to all my actors who adjusted to the schedule. Without their patience, we wouldn't be able to work out an efficient schedule that worked for all.

Shooting Locations

The story contains several locations: a surreal courtroom, a hospital room, a hospital corridor, a school, an empty room and beside a lake.

I was familiar with the campus and had clear images in my mind for shooting, so I picked up most locations fairly quickly except for a scene that happened in a hospital.

That scene started with a hospital room and continued to the corridor in the hospital. My initial thought was to use a room decorated as a hospital room and search for a corridor elsewhere that resembles one in the hospital. Accompanied by my producer, I scouted several locations for the corridor and took location pictures. The second floor in the Belo New Media building naturally looked like a hospital (Figure 4: Picture of Belo New Media Center).



Figure 4: Picture of Belo New Media Center

Yet, I had to give up upon the idea of looking for a room, as my team considered it as unnecessary and inconvenient. I deleted the scene in the hospital room from the script and confirmed that my team was right. Starting with the corridor made the scene even more powerful.

After considering and comparing different locations, I determined *The Trial* shooting locations. Locations on university campus were: Studio 4E in the department building, second floor of Belo New Media Center, Littlefield House and the garden in Littlefield Dorm. The only location outside of campus was Barton Springs Pool.

As all the shooting locations were decided, I requested approval for shooting to the school. Department staff Mr. Bert Herigstad helped me with requesting permissions for filming on campus. Through him and other UT staff, the places on campus were booked for my shooting. The permit for shooting at Barton Springs Pool was also sent to me after I requested it from City of Austin via email. With help from my advisor, Dr. Berg, and my professor, Mr. Geoff Marslett, the school approved my reservation for shooting in Studio 4E in the department building.

The Storyboard

Also during this time, I finished the storyboard for the entire film. Though it's only a 10-12 minute film, I put tremendous consideration into the storyboard. I hoped to create a film that has its own visual style but still contains a clear storyline. Carefully pondered every shot and camera position, I drew some sketches and eventually created a self-explanatory Power-point file with diagrams for each shot (Figure 5: Illustration from *The Trial* Storyboard).

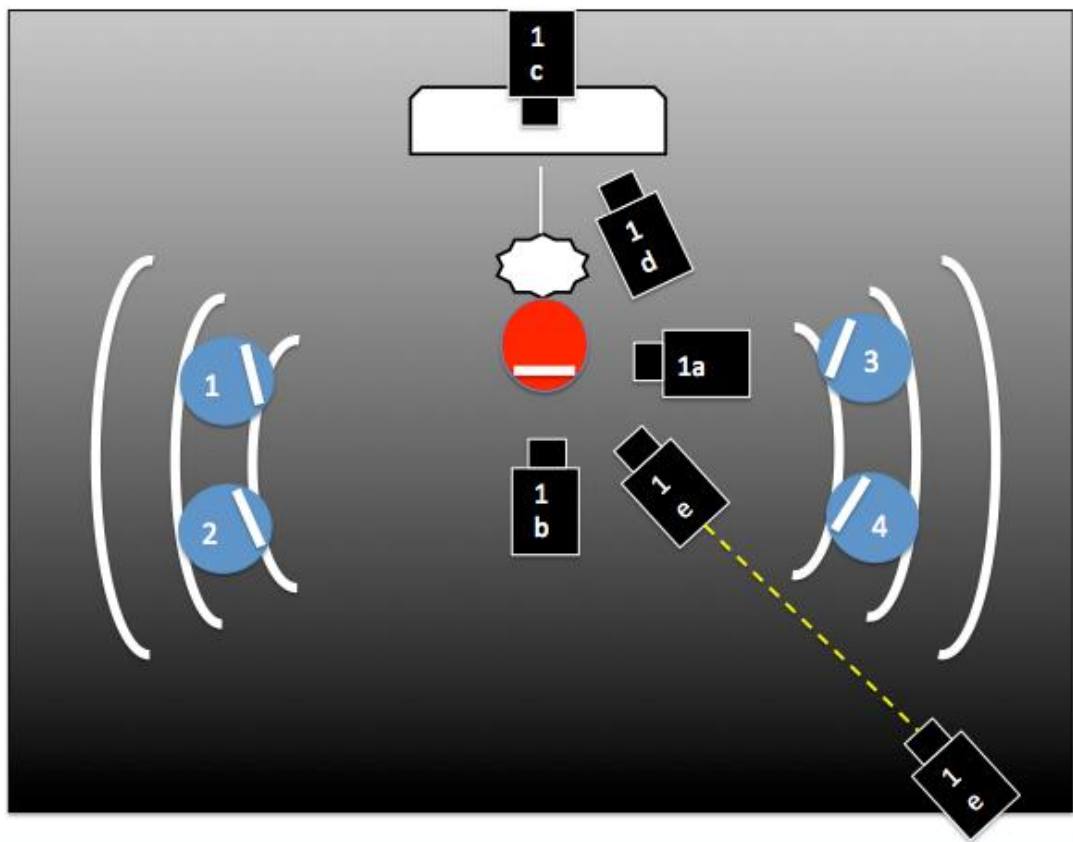


Figure 5: Illustration from *The Trial* storyboard

DP Colemar also finished a rough diagram for over-all lighting scheme in the courtroom scenes. He supported my plan of shooting with lighting in the studio for the courtroom scenes to create the style, but without artificial lighting outside of the studio, for natural looking images (Figure 6: *The Trial* Lighting Scheme Sketch by Colemar Nichols).

Towards the end of September, I successfully gathered a group of kind and talented people to work on the film, and I had a clear mind for every shooting detail. Also, I organized a cast meeting. At the meeting, I briefly explained the schedule and the storyboard. Still Photographer Andy took headshot pictures of the actors. All my actors were excited about the project. I started to feel confident about the incoming shooting.

The Dramatic Turn

In the morning of Sep. 24, about 20 days before the first shooting date on Oct. 15, I sadly received an email from my DP Colemar, notifying me his departure from *The Trial* project. Before I had time to be upset, I received another email from one of the actors with a similar message. I was facing losing the most important crew member and an actor. Although I felt betrayed and frustrated, I knew the shooting must continue. If I gave up at this point, all the effort my team and I contributed would be in vain. The reason my actor was leaving the project was that the shooting schedule conflicted with her new job. I replied to my actor's email right away, letting her know that I would rearrange her shooting schedule to keep her in my cast. She wrote back to me, indicating that she was willing to negotiate. Thus, I contacted one of my other actors, asking if he has flexible schedule so I could change his shooting time to another day and schedule her into the day. Luckily, he gave a positive answer. Once both actors agreed, I quickly sent out a new schedule to everyone in my team.

Realizing that I couldn't bring Colemar back to the project, I posted another crew call online, specifically looking for a DP. Surprisingly, I received a response from someone called Gregory Brown on the next day. We talked for longer than expected on our first meet-up. The fact that Gregory Brown had his own thoughts for my project made me decide immediately that he was the qualified DP I preferred. The DP I've been

looking for should always have a creative mind, and Gregory does. Therefore, I officially invited him to join in my production squad. If anyone asks me to tell the story of the making of *The Trial*, I would narrate how I dramatically met my DP Gregory.

When October approached, I finally had a full cast and crew, and a firm shooting schedule (Appendix C: *The Trial* Cast & Crew List; Appendix D: *The Trial* Final Shooting Schedule). Since my two ADs couldn't be on set for all the shooting dates, I requested them to take shifts. In addition, I revised the script and storyboard two more times to make it more logical and practical.

I held two more crew meetings before the shooting. We went through the on-set logistics, especially lighting schemes. We all agreed on the idea of shooting the studio scenes with studio lights and outdoor scenes with natural light. The idea behind this plan was to create the concept of contrast: The courtroom is dark and surreal while the outside world is bright but sad.

Equipment and Props

As for equipment and props, we tried to keep everything within our budget. Over several pre-production meetings, we listed all the equipment and props required for the shooting. We determined what could be checked out from the university, what we had or could borrow, and what needed to be purchased or rented. We had plentiful camera related equipment since I own a Canon 6D camera and a 28mm-300mm zoom lens. In addition, the Assistant Camera (AC), my best friend Mengwen Cao, had a Canon 5D Mark II and three lenses.

Producer Glen borrowed a wheel chair from a friend, and Mofei Wang lent a real ring to me. I purchased some equipment and props later on. Things were getting ready over time except for the chair, which would appear in most shots, and, for that reason, the

choice of the chair had to be carefully considered. I spent a certain amount of time searching for a qualified chair: paying attention to postings on local Craigslist, asking friends and visiting furniture shops. It was not an easy mission as the budget set a limitation. One of the vintage furniture shops we went to had a cheap but nice chair, which I thought would look great on camera. We could not take it right away because it didn't fit into our small car. I called the store the next day for the chair, and they told me it had been sold. The search for the chair continued.

Meanwhile, I reserved the equipment with the university. Realizing we couldn't acquire all the lights I preferred, especially the 1000W light, I started to look up rental lights but only found out they were too expensive for a project with tight budget. DP Gregory advised that one 1000W light would make a difference if we carefully arranged the other lights. Thus, we decided that spending money on renting one light would be necessary. Eventually, I found a lighting equipment rental shop with reasonable prices and went there. The shop had a large selection of lights and lighting related accessories. They even had a discount for students, so I rented a light for cheap price. I also bought lighting gels from the shop.

The Final Week of Pre-production

Within the finally week before the shooting, I emailed a call sheet to everyone and contacted my set designer Joe, who confirmed that my set was ready for the shooting. Also, the casting for the mob scene was posted online and on several bulletin boards around the university campus. As suggested by my producer, it was highlighted on the poster that free pizza would be provided to anyone who came. He also created an online form for people who were interested to fill in, so that we could count the number of people coming to the studio before the shooting. On October 13, I checked out equipment

from the school with help from the crew, my professor Geoff Marslett and Mrs. Linda Cavage. Everything seemed ready going into the shooting.

Chapter 4: The Camera Is Speeding

The Trial was scheduled to be shot within five days, from Oct. 15 to Oct. 19.

Day One (Wednesday, Oct. 15th)

At 6:00 in the morning, the crew arrived at Barton Springs Pool to capture the sunrise for the first scene. The first day of shooting began.

Sherrl, the make-up artist, started working on a special make-up: a ring mark on my protagonist's finger. Meanwhile, the crew set up the camera. The sun started to rise, shining on the foggy water. We were all amazed witnessing this beautiful view. I was excited that my idea about the sunrise worked.

The shooting went well. We finished the first scene within two hours. Before we left, I requested that my DP added two long shots of the view. The scene was built on mainly close-ups, but I certainly couldn't leave without capturing this astonishing view. One of the shots, which focused on the reflection of the city building in the water, was so beautiful that I almost forgot to say "Action" (Figure 7: Still from *The Trial* footage).



Figure 7: Still from *The Trial* footage

As we were leaving the location, I could tell from people's faces that they were cheered up by the view and what the camera captured.

The second location was in one of the rooms inside Littlefield House on campus. Littlefield House is a historic home with marvelous Victorian style decoration. When I was pondering a location for the scene, this was the first place that came to my mind.

The crew arrived at the House around 9:30 a.m. I set up a call time, which was half an hour later for actors than the crew, so the crew had time to get the set ready for shooting. But when I arrived, Mrs. Addie Alexander, who would be plaintiff 1 in the film, was waiting for me at the door. My actors' passion for acting and for film contributed a lot in the production process.

For this scene, a spacious room was needed. It took us a while to move some furniture out of the shooting room. Once the actors' make-up was ready, we started filming. While doing the first take, we realized that the lighting was not enough even

though we had three studio lights on. The room was in the shade regardless the sunshine outside. We had to open all the window blinds and a side door of the house to get enough light for filming.

The first shot contains the movement of the sliding doors in the room. Two of my Production Assistants (PA) hid behind the doors and push the doors to close. Unexpectedly, the doors were difficult to slide smoothly. We tried almost 15 takes for a smooth closing of the door. Eventually, we had a good take. The next two shots were tracking shots, for which we set up the tracks and dolly (Figure 8: Illustration of the tracking shots from *The Trial* Storyboard).

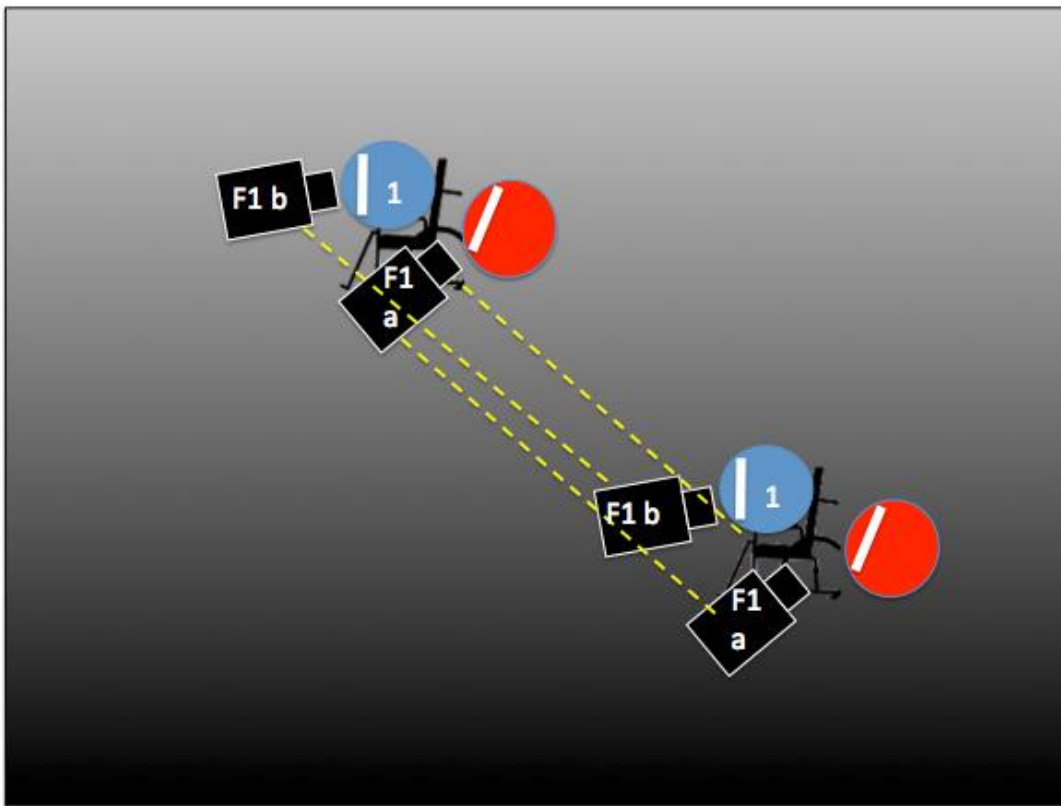


Figure 8: Illustration of the tracking shots from *The Trial* Storyboard

Needless to say, the most difficult part of a tracking shot is to sync the camera move with the object's move, which in our case was a wheelchair pushed forward by the protagonist. We spent three hours on the shots and finally captured what we hoped to get. The story in this scene was that the protagonist, the son, left his mother in an empty room. Addie, who acted as the mother, devoted so much emotion to the scene that her eyes turned red during the shot. Later on, she narrated her personal experience to me, which resembled the plot. After several takes, I started to feel bad about her going through the same emotion over and over. But, when I checked with her, she smiled and said that we should finish filming first (Figure 9: Still from *The Trial* footage).



Figure 9: Still from *The Trial* footage

Now I have a better understanding of the saying that good actors are acting with their souls, and I respect actors even more. As we wrapped up the tracking shots, the first day of shooting ended.

In the evening of that day, I received the astonishing final PDF file of the movie poster designed by my graphic designer Siim Laine. Since he sent over the first draft, we had been discussing the revision of the poster. Siim had been very patient and professional during the process. Usually, he turned in a newly revised version the next day after we talked. The final version of the poster looked gorgeous (Figure 10: *The Trial* poster designed by Siim Laine).

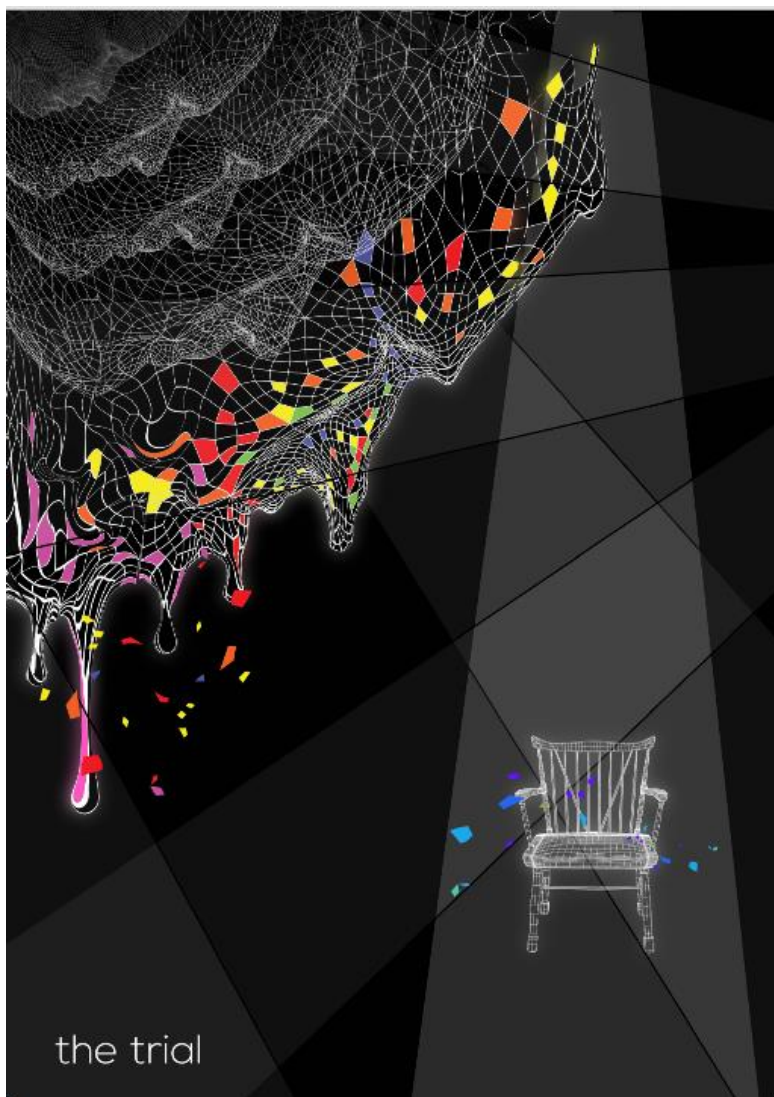


Figure 10: *The Trial* poster designed by Siim Laine

After I handed the file to my producer Glen, he sent it to a printing shop for quick printing. The shop notified us that we could get it on Friday, Oct. 17.

We confronted several difficulties on the first shooting day, but I knew that more challenges were yet to come. However, I take this as the attraction of filmmaking. Unexpected incidents always happen on set. Almost all film shooting needs some measure of improvisation.

That night, I saw a posting on Craigslist about a beautiful vintage chair. The price was slightly over the budget but I decided to consider purchasing. I contacted the owner and set up a meet-up time on the next day.

Day Two (Thursday, Oct. 16th)

The only scene shot on the second day was one of the flashbacks during sunset time at Littlefield Garden. That was the time of the day when fewest students entered the garden.

The crew and the actors waited for a few minutes till the sun dropped to the horizon for getting the directional light, then started filming around 6:00. Our 9-year old actor, Nick Grenier, is a very mature and smart child. He clearly knew what to do for the scene and how to react to my direction. The other actor, Jeff Brody (Plaintiff 2 in the film), slightly overacted at first, but quickly corrected it upon my advice.

The shots took more time than expected partially due to that from time to time, people entered the garden and appeared in the frame. We had to clean out the frame every five minutes. When the sun started going down the horizon, we were behind the schedule. DP Gregory suggested we move on as fast as possible. This scene was planned to shoot with only natural light. We did bring lights but the closest electricity outlet was located beyond the distance the extension cord could reach. Therefore, we couldn't continue

filming if the sun went down entirely. Luckily, the two shots left at that point were two close-ups. Certainly, minor lighting difference would exist among takes as the sun moved, but theoretically, it would not be too noticeable in a close-up after color grading. What I learned is that extra time should be given to each shot and counted to the schedule, so if any trouble occurs on set, the production still stays in schedule.

While we were working on the shots, my producer Glen took off to meet the owner of the chair.

After we had a production meal, my set designer Joe met us at Studio 4E at 9:00 pm. We planned to get the courtroom set ready on the same day for next day's shooting. Glen was also back at that time with the chair. The first time I saw the chair, I fell in love with it. It's such a beautiful chair. The wood on the side has an exquisite curve, and the floral fabric cover the chair indicates it's an aged piece of furniture, which is exactly what I was looking for. Now, the chair is still sitting in my apartment. I put the chair under the studio light and looked through the camera. The chair looked fabulous on camera. I double confirmed that I made the right choice.

Later on, Joe and his assistant assembled the judge's table and the audience benches. For the background to be as black as I hoped, we used black fabric to blackout the shooting area in the studio and black paper to cover the floor. Andy, the still photographer, captured the process on camera.

As other people were working on the set, the DP, lighting and grip worked on the studio lights. As mentioned, the former DP drew me a sketch of the lighting scheme, but in fact, we couldn't get all the lights included in the sketch. DP Gregory suggested using more ceiling lights so the floor lights could be saved for lighting up the actors' faces. However, we had to skip arranging most of the backlights in the sketch because of the limited amount of lights we had.

The set assembly was time-consuming work. Soon I realized we couldn't finish the set that night. We also ran out of black fabric, black paper and the paint we use for the judge's table. Having no choice, I decided to send the crew home for a good sleep and have them back early tomorrow morning to finish the set.

My AD Elijahwan set up a gopro before we started working on the set, hoping to document the process and create a time lapse video for the film website. Unfortunately, I found the machine's battery died in the middle of the recording when we cleaned out the studio.

We didn't finish the set as scheduled, but I learned a lesson. Set decoration is a very time and energy consuming work. Extra time and material should be taken into consideration ahead of the scheduled time.

Day Three (Friday, Oct. 17th)

I started to feel stressed on the morning of the third day, mainly because that day, Friday the 17th, was the first day of studio shooting, and the set was not ready on time.

The crew entered the studio at 8:00 am and started working on the set, but we still needed to wait for the material needed for the set since the stores wouldn't be open till 9 am. Before my producer brought material from the store, we worked on the lights again. The scene contains practical lights, as well as studio lights. The practical bulb was a 40W Edison type bulb, which couldn't be used as a major light source for the camera. To make the practical work, we fix the practical beneath a 1000W ceiling light, using ropes and clips. This amateur installation was not beautiful but it did the job. My grip Max Bricker joked that the thing should be uploaded to the famous Shitty Rigs website (Figure 11: Photograph of grip Max and lighting assistant Travis working on the practical light).



Figure 11: Photograph of grip Max and lighting assistant Travis working on the practical light. Photo credit: Andy Ren

Although it didn't look professional, I was still proud that we created our own rig that actually worked well. The next problem we solved was related to color temperature. The reason I chose an Edison type bulb was that this type of tungsten bulb had a warm orange glow, and that was the effect I hoped to get. However, to restrict the orange light to a certain area, and keep the rest of the space in a normal color, we used lighting gels. We set the camera color temperature to daylight (5600 K) for the orange effect and put blue gels on the lights beyond the area, which raised the color temperature of the lights. By doing so, the practical light appeared as orange on camera while the rest of the image had a much cooler color (Figure 12: Still from *The Trial* footage).



Figure 12: Still from *The Trial* footage

When Glen arrived at the studio with the materials, we began to work on what was left to be done for the set: the judge's table was painted; black paper paved on the floor; and the plaintiffs' table was wrapped in the fabric with a nice pattern, which I chose from the fabric shop. Our actors came in before we completed the entire set. We did not want to keep them waiting, so we decided to start filming since the shooting on that day did not involve the entire set. The scenes needed to be finished that day were mainly focused on The Man (Chris Hlozek), Plaintiff 1 (Addie Alexander), Plaintiff 2 (Jeff Brody) and The Judge (Alan Nelson). Things started to move forward fast once we turned on the camera. We paused in between shots to adjust the lights, and some shots took more than time than the rest. The surprise of the day was that actor Alan had a very stunning voice. The moment he opened his mouth for the first time, everyone was astonished by the voice.

By 4:30 in the afternoon, we wrapped up the studio part of the day and shifted to another location, the second floor in Belo New Media Center, for the hospital scene. To make the place convenient for shooting, we moved some tables and chairs, and set up the camera and the tracking dolly. Actors arrived on time, including Mr. Myles Boch and his lovely 6-month old son Artemis, who would be the youngest actor in the film.

The shooting started on time. The first shot was a steady long shot, which DP Gregory indicated later as one of his favorite shots of the project (Figure 1: Still from *The Trial* footage).



Figure 13: Still from *The Trial* footage

The following tracking shot was a close-up of the baby in the actor's arm. Again, tracking shots are challenging. We had to film it multiple times to get a satisfying shot. Alan, who was acting in the shot, had been very patient. He held the baby in his arm for more than 20 minutes but didn't mention a thing. However, the baby did not have

patience. Artemis started crying with a low voice. Young people, including me, had no idea what to do. My actors, especially Alan and Addie, quickly calmed him down. From this incidence, I learned that a film director should be prepared for facing any situation on set, including a crying baby.

According to the original plan, we should finish shooting by sunset time. But, the tracking shot with an infant was not that easy. Although we moved on as fast as we can after this perticular shot, we still couldn't finish all the shots before sunset. As the inside of the building got darker, we plugged in the studio lights and put nets and silks in front of the light so it resembled the daylight. Combined with the ceiling lights in the building, the lighting was just enough for filming. Around 9:30 pm, something unexpected happened. The building turned off most of the ceiling lights. We suddenly lost half of the lighting. The studio lights were still powerful enough for filming, but the lighting difference became obvious on camera after we removed the nets to increase the lighting. This was because that by removing the nets, we changed the light from soft to hard. Another associated problem that occured was that the background started appearing black as we centered all the lights to illuminate actors' faces (Figure 14: Still from *The Trial* footage).



Figure 14: Still from *The Trial* footage

The shooting went on till 11:00 pm. Everyone was tired but nobody complained, for which they won my respect. When I finally arrived home on that day, Glen contacted me about the good news: the film poster had been printed out and he would bring it to the studio the next day. Although I was disappointed with the lighting on set just minutes ago, I jumped up when I heard the great news.

The next day was the most important and intense day during the production process. We had the mob scene and several big scenes on the schedule. Before going to sleep, I tried to go through the shooting list again so I had a clear mind for all the shots but was distracted by the fact that only three people signed up for join in the mob scene shooting, including a friend. The people who emailed me earlier inquiring the mob scene notified me that they couldn't make the day for different reasons. And, I couldn't be certain that the three people who signed up would actually show up. In case we didn't have enough extras for the mob scene, I requested that all my crew wear the clothes

needed for the shooting so they could be extras temporarily. At that point, I still hoped more people would come helping with the mob scene.

Day Four (Saturday, Oct. 18th)

The entire morning of the fourth shooting day was used for preparing the mob scene shooting. Actors also came in early for rehearsal of the scenes while the crew was working on the set. I hoped that the production team would be well prepared to shoot the scene with a group of extras and wrap it up within two to three hours. As we finished arranging the entire set, it looked very much like what I visualized from the script. I was proud that we created a surreal courtroom in a studio using a limited amount of money (Figure 15: Photography of actors and crew on the finished courtroom set).



Figure 15: Photograph of actors and crew on the finished courtroom set. Photo credit: Andy Ren

By 2:00 in the afternoon, no extras had showed up. I knew that I had to face the fact that no one would come. My DP and I had an emergency meeting. We decided to “cheat” the scenes that needed extras. The only lucky thing was that all of my crew wore the right clothes for the shooting as I had requested, and extras would be in the dark background. Later on, my friend arrived as promised. The producer dragged a passerby into the shooting.

With six instead of 60 people as extras, we started shooting the mob scene with my crew and friend. However, I still needed to decide which part of the set to give up on camera since the six extras could only fill a small area in the set. After several takes, I realized that long shots didn’t work for the situation any more, so I made the decision of changing some of the long shots to medium shots and close-ups in order to avoid including the empty set in the frame. Since the extras were in the relatively dark background all the time, and their faces were not recognizable on camera, I asked them to change positions every time the camera changed angle. The result was that the camera captured the entire set in separate shots, and extras were moving around the set to fill up the background margin.

My crew extras did a great job of acting. They all tried their best to help with the shooting. In one scene, extras needed to speak loud at the same time, and they all shouted at their highest volume.

However, the filming moved on slowly. We had to do many shots differently from the storyboard. Every time we changed the camera position, we had to re-arrange the lights. These were all unexpected problems. As the shooting went on for longer than scheduled, one of my actors lost patience. He gave me a harsh time during the rest of the shooting. As I think about it now, this happened because first, the set was slightly smaller than designed, therefore, I had to spend some time re-thinking some shots. Second, we

did not have enough extras. To get the mob scene to work as planned, extras needed to move around the set. And, every time they changed position, the lights needed to be re-arranged as well. This took even more time. Finally, I didn't have much experience directing so many people at the same time. While focusing on the shooting, I ignored the actors' feelings.

Although feeling upset and stressed, I understood the shooting must be finished. Fortunately, Gregory stayed calm the entire time, and that was the greatest support I could get as a director. Eventually, we finished this part.

While having a production dinner, I invited everyone to sign on my poster. They all liked the poster and gave compliments.

When we wrapped up that day some time near midnight, I felt so many pent up emotions that needed to be released. Before we left the studio, one of my actors, Alan Nelson, walked to me and gave me a big hug. Meagan Cavasar (as Plaintiff 3) did the same. Then Kayl Aura (as Plaintiff 4). Then my producer Glen. My crew did not say anything but started taking care of equipment and cleaning the set. One of my ADs, Elijahwan, came to ask for a discussion about next day's shooting details. We went through every detail even before the first shooting day. I knew that was his way trying to comfort. Though it was midnight, nobody seemed rush to leave. That was a touching moment. I was so moved by these kind people. All my negative emotions disappeared. What left was my gratitude towards these people. I was and will always be proud working and getting to know them.

Day Five (Sunday, Oct. 19th)

The fifth day was the last shooting day of *The Trial* project. The mission for the day was easier to complete compared the previous day. Even so, the shooting still needed everyone's full attention.

The first few shots were about the interaction between The Man and Plaintiff 4. Meagan Cavasar (as Plaintiff 4) was such a great actress that we did her four takes really quick.

My other young actor, six-year-old Coppélia Guidry, arrived for the next scene. Coppélia is a very lovely and innocent girl. After she entered the studio, she walked to me and put an envelope in my hand. "A gift" she said. I opened it and saw a greeting card made by the girl. Her childish writing was on the card "Thanks for letting me be in your movie!" (Figure 16: Photograph of Coppélia's greeting card).

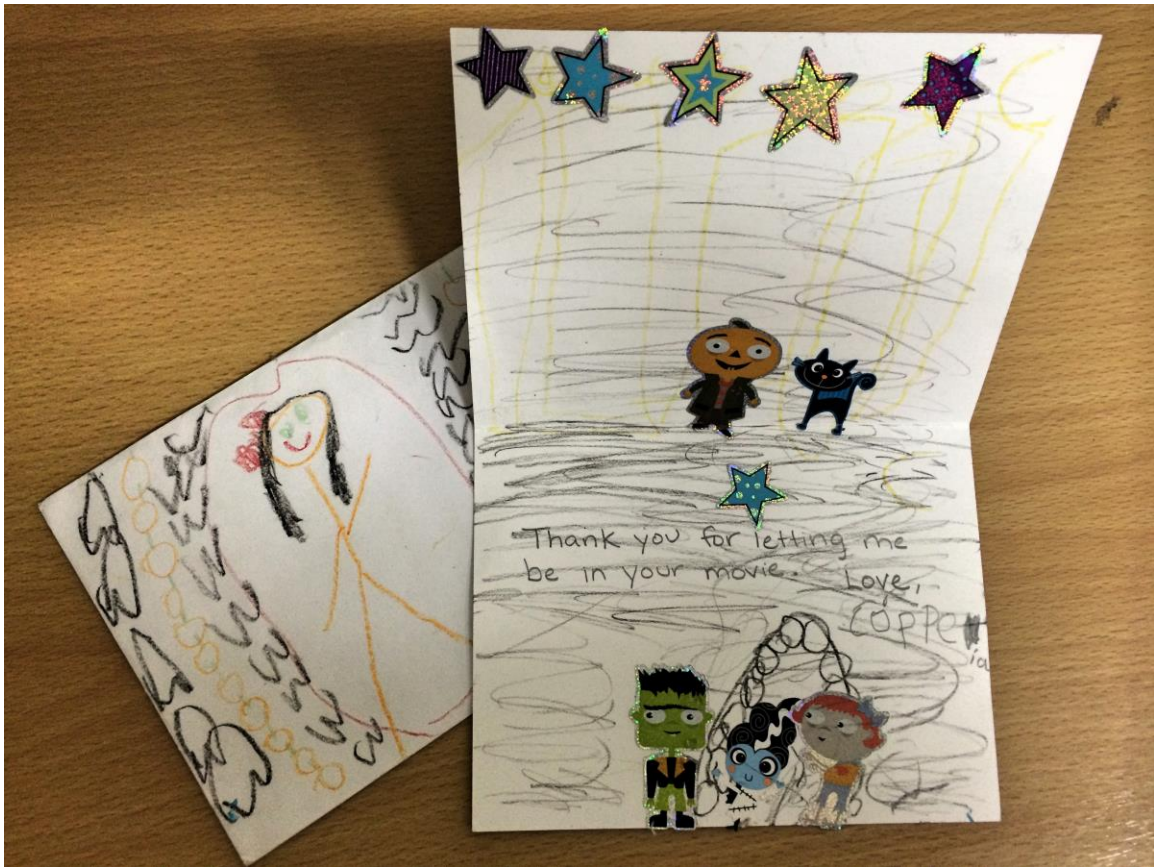


Figure 16: Photograph of Coppélia's greeting card

That was the most heartwarming gift I had received, and it's from my actor! No words can describe how happy I was. I could not help but hug her twice.

Before we started filming, she whispered into my ear that she was nervous because this was her first role in a film. I was amused and told her not to worry. In fact, her scene contains a shot of her and Chris's shadows and another one of her eyes. In order to create shadows on the wall, we directed two lights onto the white wall. We also used apple boxes to let Coppélia stand with Chris in the same height so the camera could capture both of their shadows clearly. When both of them stood into the frame, the image

on camera looked amazing: the shadow of an adult hand holding a child's hand under the light (Figure 17: Still from *The Trial* footage).



Figure 17: Still from *The Trial* footage

Coppélia has beautiful shining eyes. Back at the audition, I noticed that her eyes shine out something different from just pure innocence, something sad and cold. Once we started working on the close-up of her eyes, I found it more difficult than I thought. To get the extreme close-up I preferred, Coppélia needed to stand still like a stone. The camera focus changed once she moved. This was not easy for a child. But, Coppélia tried her best. She stood still on an apple box and looked directly into the lens for more than one minute. DP Gregory and I monitored the image on camera. Both of us were very satisfied with what we captured. Later on, Gregory told me this was his second favorite shot in this project. Thanks to Coppélia and her beautiful eyes (Figure 18: Still from *The Trial* footage).



Figure 18: Still from *The Trial* footage

We went on finishing most shots quickly except for one. In the script, the shot contained two characters, which would be acted by one actor. The story behind the scene is that the protagonist, The Man on trial, is confronted by his doppelganger. Since it would be different for me to find a stand-in for my protagonist, I planned to let Chris act as two characters and shoot separately. Through post-production, the two shots can be made into one if filmed in the correct way. Chris brought different clothes for the two characters. After we shot the first one, he changed his clothes to be the other character. To make the shots easier to be put together in post-production, we made sure that the background was pitch black on camera (Figure 19 & 20: Stills of two separate shots from *The Trial* footage).



Figure 19 & 20: Stills of two separate shots from *The Trial* footage

In my storyboard, I had several high angle to bird's eye view shots. I considered it as practical for the camera to be set up on the stairs for reaching the ceiling lights in the studio. However, it turned out I had to give up on those types of shots. The camera could be easily set up on the stairs, but the ceiling lights were in the frame if shooting long shots. We tried out two medium shots and skipped the rest.

Reminded by my producer Glen, we shot a few videos of the empty chair with the practical light dangling above, which would be used on our film website.

As we recorded the room tone as the last thing, I announced the wrap of the shooting. People applauded and came to congratulate me. All my actors hugged and thanked me. I felt like the happiest person in the world. The wrapping moment is always the best moment during a film project, and I know I can start expecting a similar moment to come following the completion of editing the footage.

Chapter 5: The Production Just Began

As *The Trial* finished its shooting process, it went directly into post-production. Even more work needed to be done in post-production. One of the world greatest directors, Stanley Kubrick, was quoted as saying “I might say that everything that precedes editing is merely a way of producing film to edit.”¹ This is when the real production begins.

Currently, *The Trial* is in the progress of post-production. A detailed plan and time frame is indicated below.

The Trailer

The first goal of *The Trial* post-production is to complete the editing of the film trailer. I have started watching the footage and planed on finishing it by Dec. 20. Since launching public fundraising and creating a website for the film are included in the production plan, the trailer of the movie is significant for both purposes.

Publicity

An official Facebook page and website for the film are currently under construction. My producer Glen Kelp is responsible for both. He worked out an amazing design for the website, which is consistent with the style the film has (Figure 21: Screenshot of *The Trial* website).

¹ Walker, A. 1972. Stanley Kubrick Directs. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

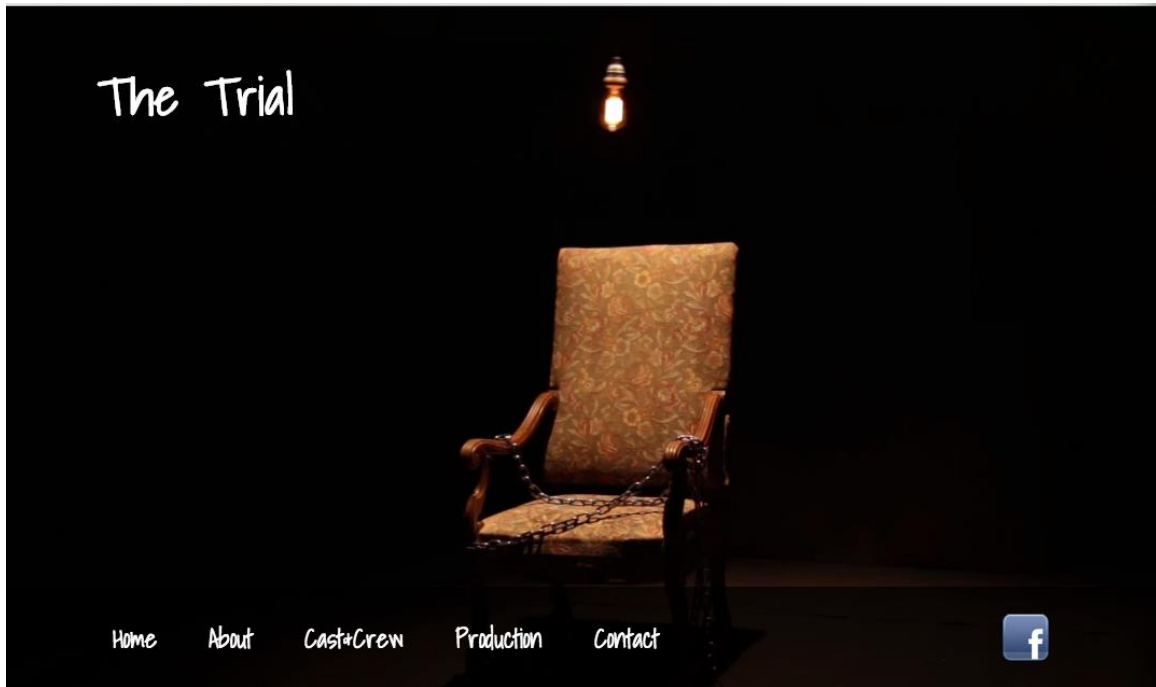


Figure 21: Screenshot of *The Trial* website

At the same time, on-set still photographer Andy Ren is working on production photos. He stayed with us for three days and took thousands of production photos. And, thanks to Glen's great suggestion, we took headshot of everyone in the cast and production team during the pre-production meetings. These photos will also be posted on the page and the website. We plan on publishing the Facebook page and the website on Dec. 10th.

Once the trailer of the film is completed, public fundraising of the film will be launched during the same time period.

Image Editing

A few weeks after the shooting, I watched a short film titled *Efficiency* at Austin Film Festival, which is written by Steven Molony and directed by Kate Enge. I was impressed by the editing technique used in the film, and it certainly gave me some

inspiration on editing *The Trial*. My basic editing principle for *The Trial* includes: first, be creative. The reason I consider *Efficiency* as a well-edited film is that in the film, flashback images are used freely yet strongly. The Spanish director Pedro Almodóvar also prefers to use flashback images in an untraditional way. This is an editing scheme I appreciate. *The Trial* contains four flashback scenes. I hope that my editing won't be limited by any traditional editing rules. Therefore, I listed being creative as my first principle.

Second, fewer cuts but stronger cuts. Through two years studying in the film school, I developed an editing style, which contains the least cuts on amount but the most powerful cuts on emotion – emotional editing. I got the idea from movies like *The Headless Woman* by Lucrecia Martel, *Melancholia* by Lars von Trier, and of course, Walter Murch, one of the greatest American editors. In his book *In the Blink of An Eye*, he listed priorities of elements in a cut, and emotion comes on the top.² I found that he was right. Emotional editing takes life to a film, and makes the film concise but powerful.

And finally, never underestimate audience's ability to understand. Will my edit make sense to the audience? This is the question I always ask myself while editing film footage. The image will always tell a story to me since I'm the creator of the story. What about the audience? Will they understand? As I started exploring editing schemes beyond the traditional ones, I found out that the audience is capable of understanding what I understand. It's not related to how I edit the image. They see what I show, they analyze what I deliver, and they have their own interpretations for the image. Thus, I will keep my own editing style and let the audience decide if it's wise.

² Murch, W. 2001. *In the Blink of An Eye*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles: Silman-James Press.

According to our original schedule, a rough cut will be done around Jan. 15, and the final picture will be ready before February.

Music and sound

Even before the production started, I had my idea and expectation for film soundtrack. *The Trial* has a main storyline that happens in the courtroom, and a sub storyline that consists of flashbacks. The difference between the two storylines is expressed through lighting in terms of image. I hope the film music will be able to further emphasize the contrast between the two storylines.

The music composer of this project is Viljar Rosin, an Estonian songwriter. Around Dec. 15, the rough cut of the film will be sent to Mr. Rosin for music.

As for sound, I'm still looking for a sound mixer. Ideally, Dolby Digital 5.1 sound is the best for a film considering its screening in a theater.

Distribution

Usually, when the film picture is locked and soundtrack ready, independent filmmakers will record their own DVDs. We will do the same. However, how to distribute on market is the most difficult part in post-production for an independent/student film. They usually resort to film festivals and the Internet.

The Trial is planned to be summited to film festivals. If possible, I hope the film is ready for submission by April.

Chapter 6: Production Summary

Since the initiation of this production idea, I received both opposition and support. Now I'm glad that I insisted in my opinion. Through the production process, I encountered countless challenges but managed to overcome most of them with the help from people who are also passionate about film. This is the most valuable lesson I learned and the most precious experience I had. From my perspective, it's the most meaningful part in film production: having problems, solving problems and eventually, gaining knowledge. Now I feel even more tied to film and film production. I am a filmmaker and I make films.

Now *The Trial* is in the post-production. I'm sure I'll have more unforgettable experiences during this process.

During the making of *The Trial*, I received tremendous help from friends, professionals and strangers. Without them, I could never go this far on my own. I sincerely thank everyone of them (Appendix E: The *Trial* Production Thank You List).

Appendix A
***The Trial* Shooting Script**

THE TRIAL

Written by

Rui Wu

Based on, If Any

Address
Phone Number

INT. COURTROOM - NIGHT

A ceiling light is turned on. With several blinks, it spreads some dim light down. Follow the rays, a lifeless head is bowing towards the floor. Sweat is dripping from the forehead to drop on the floor.

Suddenly, this head shivers. A pair of unconscious eyes open up. The man is waking up. He panics when sees that his hands and feet are chained. The man is sitting in a chair and chained to it. He struggles crazily, but the chain only makes some noise.

THE JUDGE (O.C.)
Here I bring you The MAN.

A voice comes from above. The man raises his head. He sees: a dark space with someone who looks like a judge but in a white robe sitting on high and other six people sitting in front of him. He is in the middle of the dark space.

The only dim light flickers.

Six pairs of deadpan eyes are staring at him.

THE JUDGE (CONT'D)
Plaintiffs, state your charges!

A lady, 55, stands up. Her face comes under the light.

PLAINTIFF 1
He is a child of kind parents and a man with a lovely home, but he has ditched his family and made the old sad, the young cry. Therefore, your honor, I accuse the man of selfishness.

THE CROWD
(towards the man)
Yes, that's a sin. Shame on you!

The man squints his eyes to look at the old lady's face with confusing.

THE MAN
Mom? Didn't you die long time ago?

THE JUDGE
Did you bring your evidence?

PLAINTIFF 1
Yes, your honor.

2.

From the dark, a wheelchair slowly rolls into the light.

Sound of the rolling wheelchair

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE - DAY (IN SLOW MOTION AND MOS)

The sound of the rolling wheelchair

A pair of hands is rolling a wheel chair forward. The mother is sitting on it. The wheel chair is being rolled to enter an empty room. The door of the room shuts.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. COURTROOM - NIGHT

THE MAN
(guiltily)
Mom...

His voice is buried under the angry noise of the people.

THE JUDGE
Next!

A middle-aged man steps forward. His brutal eyes stare at the man.

PLAINTIFF 2
Have you ever honored the order?
Think about what you did. Never
obeyed the basic principles of
being a decent citizen. Never fully
been fond of education. Terrorist!
A total terrorist!

THE CROWD
Terrorist. He's a terrorist!...

THE MAN
What is going on? Mr. Baltar?

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOLMASTER'S OFFICE - DAY (IN SLOW MOTION AND MOS)

A pair of walking foot steps on some leaves on the ground.

3.

Mr. Baltar, who looks younger than in the previous scene, is walking away from a school building with his luggage.

He turns around to look at two figures standing afar in front of the building. Sadly, he turns back and continues walking.

A man who dresses as the schoolmaster is watching him leaving. Under his arm, a 15-year old boy with tears on his cheek reveals an evil smile. A severe bruise is on his forehead.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. COURTROOM - NIGHT

The light scar is on the man's forehead.

PLAINTIFF 2 (O.S.)
I guess it's not necessary for me
to present the evidence.

The voice of angry people shouts at the man.

THE CROWD
You have no respect! No!

THE JUDGE
Quiet!

PLAINTIFF 3 (O.C.)
Your honor, he's the liar!

A young girl in her 20s speaks passionately.

THE MAN
Oh no, you are... Jessie...
Jessie? Is that you?

The young lady turns to face the man. Her cold face is right under the light.

(The image freezes at the moment. The noise of the crowd winds down. People are all freezing at their positions except for the man.)

The man struggles to get out of the chain but the chain makes a sound to refuse. He stands half up and leans forward to be an inch closer to the girl.

THE MAN (CONT'D)
Jessie, my sweetheart, please...
don't call me a liar...

4.

PLAINTIFF 3
Yes you are. You said you'd come
back...

CUT TO:

INT. WALL - DAY (IN SLOW MOTION AND MOS)

The shadow of an adult hand holding a child's hand. Suddenly,
the adult hand lets go of the tiny hand.

This is the image in a little girl's eyes. First clear, then
vague, finally vanishes into all black. There are no tears.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. COURTROOM - NIGHT

Dissolving to Plaintiff 3's face.

PLAINTIFF 3
But you never did.

She turns her cold face to the judge.

PLAINTIFF 3 (CONT'D)
Your honor, I charge him with
dishonesty! Many lies he has
claimed as the truth, many innocent
souls he has tortured. I condemn
him for these people!

THE CROWD (MOSTLY GIRLS)
Liar! Liar!

THE MAN
Jessie? I'm so sorry...

Tears fills up his eyes but it couldn't stop the angry crowd.

Before he can finish talking, a 30ish woman stands up.

PLAINTIFF 4
We don't punish people making
mistakes, but you, pathetically,
refuse to confess. The kindest
people who tried to fix you has
been suffering from your contempt.
(MORE)

5.

PLAINTIFF 4 (CONT'D)
No body is good enough for you to
show respect. You're incorrigibly
arrogant!

THE CROWD
Yeah, we don't bear arrogancy!
Sinner!

The man squints his eyes to see the woman clearly.

THE MAN
Eve?

THE JUDGE
Please present your evidence.

A strange man in a black robe rolls a wheel table to the
middle of the room. On the table, a box reveals under the
central light. He slowly opens the box. A wedding ring is
shining inside the box.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE - DAY (IN SLOW MOTION AND MOS)

The seaweeds are moving along the wave. Something drops into
the water. The ripple spreads out. A hand slowly gets closer
to the water surface. A ring mark is on his third finger, but
the ring is missing.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. COURTROOM - NIGHT

THE MAN
Honey it's all my fault... please
forgive me...

THE CROWD
Arrogant! You're arrogant!

His voice is so inferior in the swirl of the noise.

THE JUDGE
Quiet!... Is that all?

The entire room quiets down. Among the absolute silence, a
voice comes from the other end of the room.

PLAINTIFF 5
Your Honor...

People all turn around to look at the gentleman who was speaking.

He's clearly the same man on trial but in decent suit. Followed by people's glare, he walks from the other end to an empty seat at the plaintiff table and stands facing the audience.

PLAINTIFF 5 (CONT'D)
Life is so short and precious.

He pauses intentionally to look at the judge.

PLAINTIFF 5 (CONT'D)
But the only attitude this man showed towards life was indifference! His time and body have been wasted. He doesn't even care for his own ego. Apathy is the crime he committed, your honor! It's the most intolerant crime!

The man is terrified to see himself stating his own crimes.

THE MAN
This is too cruel...

THE JUDGE
And your evidence?

Plaintiff 5 doesn't speak. Instead, he points his finger at the man.

THE CROWD
Let him die! Give him death penalty! Can't have him alive!...

The crowd has been stimulated. People all leave their seats and confront him in anger. The man falls. He looks at all the angry faces with despair.

The man couldn't hold on to his emotions any more. Tears drop from his chin.

THE MAN
Yes! I'm a sinner for my own life. Give me death sentence! Let me end this life!

THE JUDGE
End your life? No my friend, you
don't deserve that.

The judge raises the gavel.

THE JUDGE (CONT'D)
Considering the severe crimes you
have committed, I hereby sentence
you to suffer from this life all
over again! Convicted!

The man cries out.

THE MAN
No, please don't...

People cheer and applaud. The light turns off.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

A figure is walking along the hospital corridor. A new born
baby is sleeping in his arms.

The doctor, the same person as the judge, carries the baby
with caution and walks along the corridor towards the lobby.

A crowd of people, the same crowd at the courtroom, is
waiting outside. They all stand up to welcome the doctor and
the newborn with happy faces.

THE DOCTOR
(cheerfully)
It's a boy!

People circle the boy with big smiles chatting.

PLAINTIFF 4
Such a nice baby! Aw...

PLAINTIFF 2
Beautiful!

PLAINTIFF 3
A pretty creature... Hi baby...

PLAINTIFF 1
Look at that tiny face...

THE DOCTOR
He's going to be a good boy!

The doctor raises the baby into the air.

8.

People cheer and applaud.

THE END

Appendix B

The Trial Rough Production Plan

TIME	CONTENT
Aug. 31 st , 2014	Budgeting
Sep. 1 st , 2014	Post casting/crew call online
Sep. 15 th , 2014	Audition
Oct. 5 th , 2014	Set design starts
Oct. 15 th -Oct. 19 th , 2014 (Wed-Sun, Subject to be changed)	On-set shooting
Oct. 25 th – Dec. 10 th , 2014	Website and Facebook page construction
Nov. 30 th – Dec. 20 th , 2014	Trailer Editing
Dec. 1 st , 2014 – Jan. 15 th , 2015	Image Editing
Jan. 10 – Mar. 1 st , 2015	Effects, Sound Mixing, Music and Distribution

Appendix C
***The Trial* Cast & Crew List**

CAST		
ROLE	NAME	AVAILABILITY
The Judge	Alan Nelson	All dates
The Man	Chris Hlozek	All dates
Plaintiff 1 (The Mother)	Addie Alexander	Available before 19 th
Plaintiff 2 (Mr. Baltar)	Jeff Brody	Available before by 18 th
Plaintiff 3 (Jessie)	Meagan Cavasar	Available 17 th , 18 th and 19 th
Plaintiff 4 (The Wife)	Kayl Aura	All dates
The Schoolmaster	Woody Wilson	All dates except for 15 th
Young Protagonist	Nick Grenier	Available on 16 th
Young Jessie	Coppélia Guidry	Available on 19 th

CREW		
POSITION	NAME	AVAILABILITY
Director	Rui Wu	All dates
1st AD	Nader Ibrahim	All dates except for Oct. 18 th
2nd AD	Elijahwan Butler	All dates except for Oct. 17 th
Producer	Glen Kelp	All dates
Budgeting	Mofei Wang	N/A
DP	Gregory Brown	All dates
AC	Mengwen Cao	All dates except for Oct. 18 th
Lighting	Travis Dover	All dates
Gaffer	Annie Tadvick	Available on Oct. 18 th
Grip	Max Bricker	All dates
Production Sound	Ben Liu	All dates except for Oct. 17 th
Set Design	Joe Averagi	All dates
Costume & Make-up	Sherrl Carpenter	All dates except for Oct. 15 th at 10 am
	Roxanne McDanel	Available on Oct. 15 th at 10 am
Still Photographer	Andy Ren	All dates except for Oct. 15 th and Oct. 17 th
PA	John Jackson	All dates
	Rebecca Jackson	Available on Oct. 18 th
	Tomas Raker	All dates

	Joel Deeter	Available on Oct. 18th
Graphic Design	Siim Laine	N/A
Visual Effects	Kris Kelp	N/A
Composer	Viljar Rosin	N/A

Appendix D

***The Trial* Final Shooting Schedule**

Oct. 13th (Monday)

Time: 2-4p Location: HSM Equipment Check-out

Content: Equipment Check-out

* This place has limited parking spots. Please consider parking elsewhere if driving.

END OF DAY

Oct. 15th (Wednesday)

Time: 630a-10a Location: Barton Springs Pool

Scenes: Flashback 4 (F4 a, b)

Equipment & Props: Camera, tripod, filters and the ring. Special make-up needed on forehead and finger.

Time: 10a-2p Location: Littlefield House

Flashback 1 (F1 a, b, c)

END OF DAY

Oct. 16th (Thursday)

Time: 4:30p-7:30p Location: Littlefield Dorm Garden

Flashback 2 (F2 a, b, c, d, e)

Equipment & Props: Camera, tripod and filters. Special make-up needed for Jeff.

7:30p-8:30p Dinner Break

Time: 9p-completion Location: Studio 4E

Set preparation & video for website

END OF DAY

Oct. 17th (Friday)

Time: 8a-5p Location: UT CMB Studio 4E

Courtroom Scene for Plaintiff 1 & 2 (2a, 2c; 3b, 3b r, 3c; 5c, 5d; 7f, 7g, 1d)

Equipment & Props: Camera, tripod, lights, tracking dolly, wheelchair, the ring and the rolling table. Special make-up needed for Chris.

**1230-130p Lunch break*

Time: 5p-9p Location: BMC Second Floor

Hospital Scene (Ha, b, Hc r; H c, d, f, e, g)

Equipment & Props: Camera, tripod, lighting, tracking dolly. Special make-up needed for Chris.

9-930p Dinner

END OF DAY

Oct. 18th (Saturday)

Time: 8a-1230p Location: Studio 4E

Mob Scene Preparation

12-1230p Lunch Break

1230-3p Rehearsal

Time: 3-7p Location: Studio 4E

Mob Scene (6a r; 1e, 5b, 3d, 6a, 7a-1, 7h, 7h r, 2d; 2b, 3a, 4c)

Extras will come in at 3p

Time: 7p-completion Location: UT Studio 4E

Scene 1c, 7c, 7b, 7d, 7a; 6b-2, 6b-1, 6c, 6c r

Time: 10p-completion Location: Studio 4E

Set tearing down

END OF DAY

Oct 27th (Monday)

Time: 2p Location: HSM Equipment Check-in

Equipment return

Please come help out if you are free at the time.

END OF DAY

Appendix E

The Trial Production Thank You List

(Last Names in alphabetic order)

Addie Alexander	Rebecca Jackson
Kayl Aura	Glen Kelp
Joe Averagi	Kris Kelp
Bryan Barnett	Dr. Shanti Kumar
Prof. Charles Ramírez Berg	Siim Laine
Max Bricker	Anne Lewis
Jeff Brody	Ben Liu
Gregory Brown	Geoff Marslett
Elijahwan Butler	Roxanne McDanel
Mengwen Cao	Alan Nelson
Meagan Cavasar	Colemar Nichols
Linda Cavage	Tomas Raker
Sherrl Carpenter	Andy Ren
Joel Deeter	Viljar Rosin
Travis Dover	Annie Tadvick
Nick Grenier	Mofei Wang
Coppélia Guidry	Woody Wilson
Chris Hlozek	Qian Zhuang
Nader Ibrahim	
John Jackson	

Special Thanks to

University of Texas at Austin
Radio-Television- Film Department

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